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ABSTRACT

This book describes a structure for understanding and managing the process and options for gathering and analyzing data on needs. The three-phase model that forms the basis for the structure grew from both theory and practical experience in many settings. The focus is on assessing the needs of organizations rather than individuals. It is stressed that needs assessment engages the active involvement of a cross-section of recipients of service, providers of service, and representatives of the organization or system providing the services. Setting priorities and democratic involvement are emphasized. Part I focuses on planning and managing the needs assessment. Chapter 1 describes a three-phase plan, defines "needs" and "needs assessment," places needs assessment in context, and provides a method for choosing among plan options. Chapter 2 describes pre-assessment, and chapter 3 explains the tasks for Phase 2, "Assessment," with guidelines for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. Chapter 4 considers post-assessment and Phase 3 of the needs assessment. Part II consists of six chapters, five of them on methods for conducting a needs assessment. Chapter 5 explains the use of records and existing databases, while chapter 6 is devoted to surveys, interviews, and the critical incident technique. Chapter 7 describes widely used group processes: community forums, the nominal group technique; and the focus group technique. Chapter 8 describes five specialized survey and group techniques, and chapter 9 presents future-oriented needs-assessment techniques. Chapter 10 deals with specific tools for analysis, exploring "fishboning," case and consequence analysis, and "fault tree" analysis as causal analysis approaches. (Contains 11 tables, 43 figures, and 105 references.) (SLD)

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